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Sewage Purification.

For years the civilized world has worked on the problem of the safe and wise disposal of sewage. For many years it was regarded as all right to turn it into the lake or river. This plan was practical till in England and on the Continent cities became so large and the amount of sewage which they poured into the rivers so long, that the rivers were dangerously polluted. As many cities took their water supplies from these same rivers, it was really a lower town on a river drinking the sewage of a city a few miles above them.

Then came the era of fertilizing the sewage of these cities on large farms near by. Sir John B. Lawes, of Rothamstead, England, had perhaps the best model. He took a large farm and tile drained it, having the tile four feet deep in trenches about twenty feet apart, and then at night pumping the city's sewage up onto the highest points on that farm and letting it spread out all over the surface. The sewage would filter through the four feet of soil, leaving all the animal and vegetable matter in the soil to enrich it, while the water passed off through the tile drains. But every city has no hilly farm to utilize and raise big crops, though in some way future science must utilize the sewage of towns and cities, and every farmer will utilize the wastes of his own farm.

Now two phases of the problem meet us here on lake Michigan. One is to purify the lake water for our domestic use, the other is to stop contaminating the shore water by our sewage discharges into the lake. We suppose it is a scientific fact that the lake water is for all practical purposes pure, for all domestic uses, cooking drinking, etc. The body of water is so immensely large and in such constant agitation that it keeps itself pure. Hence if we will stop polluting it, and put our intake pipe out far enough to be beyond the reach of contamination from storms or floods, the water will be all right. If the water is pure, and it is, and we stop polluting it, no filter bed or other filter system is necessary. Hence the problem is how to stop polluting the lake water. We can do that in two ways, either stop pouring our sewage into the lake, or second, we can purify the sewage before it is discharged into the lake. Our people very wisely decided they did not want any filter bed, that is they did not believe in polluting the pure lake water and then go to work and purify it again so we could use it. It is probably practically pure and safe now, but still the shore water is polluted somewhat by our sewage. Now the real practical question is, can that sewage be purified; that is all the fever and disease germs be destroyed before the sewage is discharged into the lake? It can, and it is being done in many cities, and done successfully and economically. Of how to do that we will speak next week.

Equity in Special Assessments.

The recent decision of Judge Carter in Cook county to which the NEWS-LETTER called attention some two weeks ago, is a question of too vital importance to tax-payers to be forgotten. His ruling in substance was in the matter of Wabash avenue pavements, that the city must pay a part of the cost in proportion to the benefit to the general public by the new paving. This is exactly the contention which has been made by the property owners along St. Johns avenue. Every possible effort has

been made by certain members of the council and others, for reasons perfectly apparent to clear thinkers, to divert public attention from the real question at issue and, if possible, by some hocus pocus process to throw odium upon the tax payers on that street. The assessment was spread substantially two-thirds on the east side of St. Johns and one-third on the west side. Secondly, this improvement only called for improvement on St. Johns ave. from Laurel avenue to Highland. The improvement was practically of very little value to the property owners on that street for reasons perfectly apparent. Nevertheless, they never objected to paying one-half of the proposed improvements, although more costly and not of the kind they wanted. The land between St. Johns avenue east of the Chicago & Northwestern railway and First street west of that railway was as wide as other blocks; therefore, taking out the railway, there would be no reason which we can see, why the west side of the street should not pay exactly as much as the east side. Hence, for the distance from Laurel viaduct south to near the water tank the Northwestern road should certainly pay just as much as the property owners on the east side of St. Johns avenue.

Furthermore, there was a time when the public gave to the C. & N. W. railway right of way. Assuming it was a free gift, it, nevertheless, was for a value to the public; hence, either the Northwestern should be made to pay one half in justice, or the public, who had been benefited by their right of way, should pay it or at least part of it. This was substantially the only matter of contention. The decision of Judge Carter has fully justified the basis on which the property owners opposed the assessment.

This question, therefore, affects not only the property owners on St. Johns avenue, but affects the property owners on many other streets in the city. The property owners, therefore, on that street feel that they have not been simply contending for their own rights but they have been fighting the battles of every tax payer in the city, and the public are slowly but surely reaching that same conclusion and are expressing themselves in keeping with that position.

Disappointment.

Evanston is disappointed that the census taker did not find people enough inside her corporate limits. Hence the Times-Herald folks are giving Evanston a new census, and already have found in a few wards 600 more persons than Uncle Sam's census takers found.

Washington, D. C., is also disappointed. So is Cincinnati, it expected 375,000 and gets only 225,000 inhabitants. Cleveland has 375,000 and old Porkopolis is in a terrible buff. We understand Waukegan is far from satisfied.

Now we can't say why all this dissatisfaction exists, but incompetent enumerators is chiefly the trouble and these were appointed by party politicians for political purposes. A man may be a good honest man and yet be wholly unfit to take the United States census.

Have you seen the artistic needle work in Mrs. Bohl's window? A vase filled with wild flowers is worked in silk with rare skill and color fidelity. It will pay you to see this fine piece of work.

The Gad's Hill folks had some difficulty in getting just the milk supply they needed and finally one of the managers came up to the Park and inquired of good citizens who told him to see D. P. Sheahan. He did so and now our "Dan" sends or drives down his milk wagon with two or more big cans full, every afternoon and the Gadites are delighted with the Park cows, their milk and cream.

Complaint has been made to us of the destruction of birds by the arc street lamps which have globes. The birds get inside the globes and then can't get out and so flutter about till exhausted and then die. Three were seen in different globes one night recently. Why not dispense with the globes or put a wire screen over the top opening where they fall in. These lamps are no respecter of birds but kill good and bad alike.

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